

Message Text

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47

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 AGR-05 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /043 W

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7825

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, ELAB, PINT, EC

SUBJECT: CAMPESINO OCCUPATION OF GUAYAQUIL OFFICE OF IERAC
AGRARIAN REFORM AGENCY

1. A LARGE GROUP OF CAMPESINOS AFFILIATED TO THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CAMPESINO ORGANIZATIONS OCCUPIED THE GUAYAQUIL OFFICES OF THE AGRARIAN REFORM AGENCY, IERAC, ON OCTOBER 29. PRESS ACCOUNTS INDICATE THAT THE CAMPESINOS WERE ACTING TO PROTEST INACTION ON THE PART OF IERAC AND TO DEMAND THE FIRING OF AGENCY HEAD COL. FRANCISCO LARREA AND OTHER OFFICIALS. THEY WERE FORCEABLY REMOVED BY POLICE TWO HOURS LATER AND THE PRESS INDICATES NUMBERS OF INJURIES AND DETENTIONS.

2. CAMPESINO ORGANIZATIONS HAVE RECENTLY INCREASED VERBAL PRESSURE UPON GOE FOR ACTION IN AGRARIAN REFORM. THERE HAS BEEN AN EXCHANGE IN PAID ADS IN THE PRESS BETWEEN LAND OWNERS WHO OBJECT TO PROVISIONS OF THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW WHICH WILL DECLARE LANDS NOT IN PRODUCTION AS OF JANUARY 1, 1976 ELIGIBLE FOR REDISTRIBUTION AND CAMPESINOS DEMANDING LAND. THROUGHOUT THIS CONTINUING DEBATE PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ LARA HAS CONFIRMED THE GOE'S INTENTION TO CARRY OUT THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAW.

3. ACCORDING TO LOCAL LABOR SOURCES, THE OCCUPATION OF
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THE IERAC OFFICE IS THE FIRST OCCASION FOR THIS TYPE OF

CAMPESINO ACTION. THE ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED ARE AFFILIATED TO THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LABOR CONFEDERATION, CEDOC, AND REPRESENT THE LARGEST SINGLE BLOCK OF ORGANIZED CAMPESINOS.

4. EL TIEMPO COMMENTED OCT. 31 THAT THE CAMPESINOS WERE RIGHT TO PRESS FOR MORE RAPID ACTION BY IERAC, BUT SAID THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE RESORTED TO ILLEGAL ACTS. IERAC HAS PUBLISHED A DEFENSE OF ITS ACTIVITIES.

5. COMMENT: THE POLICE APPARENTLY ACTED PROMPTLY AND VIGOROUSLY. NEWSPAPER PHOTOS SHOW POLICE CLUBBING CAMPESINOS AND ACCOMPANYING NEWS STORIES SAY THAT SOME OF THE CAMPESINOS WERE INJURED FLEEING POLICE. THIS FIRM ACTION SHOULD TEND TO DISCOURAGE FUTURE SUCH ACTIONS, PARTICULARLY IF THE GOE CONTINUES TO GIVE FIRM INDICATIONS THAT IT DOES IN FACT INTEND TO MOVE FORWARD WITH AGRARIAN REFORM. IN EARLIER ANNOUNCING ITS INTENTIONS TO CARRY OUT AGRARIAN REFORM, THE GOE PROVIDED NOTICE THAT IT WILL NOT TOLERATE ILLEGAL CAMPESINO ACTION.
BREWSTER

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